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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is an opinion editorial from Constantine Passaris, chairman of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, on the occasion of Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, 1999.

FREDERICTON (CNB) -- "Human Rights Day, celebrated on Dec. 10, is a special opportunity to pause and celebrate the individual and collective commitment of all New Brunswickers toward the protection and promotion of human rights. By recognising that the qualities that unite us are much more significant than those that divide us, New Brunswickers have continually demonstrated their strong endorsement of the principles of unity in diversity.

"This very special anniversary reminds us of the important and unique role that our Commission performs for all New Brunswickers. We have much to be proud of in terms of its accomplishments in combating discrimination and promoting equality, and we look forward to the future with confidence and determination.

"On the eve of the 21st century, the Human Rights Commission is deeply conscious of its responsibility and mandate to contribute in a positive and constructive manner to the process of province building. The Commission has a strong commitment to promote human dignity, equality, justice, hope and opportunity as we continue to serve the people of New Brunswick. New ideas, new directions and new initiatives will be the hallmark of our contribution towards the protection and promotion of human rights as we approach a new century.

As we welcome a new millennium, I invite all New Brunswickers in our cities, towns and villages across our province to join with us at the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, in a new partnership and a new endeavour to promote a human rights culture into the 21st century that embraces and celebrates our diversity in all its forms, and is founded on those eternal principles of tolerance, acceptance, fairness, equality and humanity.

Working together, we can tear down the walls of discrimination and open the doors of equality. This achievement will be a tangible symbol of our individual and collective commitment to a social contract that promotes a society of generous heart and open mind.

99/12/09

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99/12/09

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